

NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN "JOBS-IN-THE-WOODS" PROGRAM GUIDANCE
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 1
North Pacific Coast and Klamath Central/Pacific Coast Ecoregions
July 3, 2000

The "Jobs-in-the-Woods" (JITW) program is one part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) contribution to the implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan. In concert with ongoing Northwest Forest Plan watershed analysis activities, the Service has allocated funding for JITW to offices in Washington, Oregon, and northern California. These funds are to be used with two purposes in mind:

- (1) to employ workers from timber dependent communities that have been dislocated by a downturn in the timber industry to the extent possible, and
- (2) to implement watershed restoration projects on non-Federal. The intent is to undertake projects that address the causes of watershed concerns, benefit species of Federal significance, support ongoing projects on Federal lands, and address actions identified during watershed analyses. Species of Federal significance include; candidate and listed species, sensitive and at-risk species, migratory birds, and anadromous fish.

Goals

The primary goals of the JITW program are to benefit the economies of forest dependent communities, to assist in the accomplishment of the Service's overall mission, and promote the restoration of biological resources. Other goals of the JITW program are to foster long-term stewardship of natural resources and to encourage partners to promote environmental education experiences. In accomplishing these goals, the JITW program will fund projects on non-Federal lands within the area affected by the Northwest Forest Plan. Coordination between agencies, and organizations will help attain program goals.

Projects will be designed, to the extent possible, to restore self-sustaining ecosystem processes and functions and native biotic communities. Historical information that documents natural biological and physical processes and conditions should be used to guide development of project objectives. When restoration of natural processes or native biotic communities is not possible, the site must be rehabilitated, to the extent practicable, to produce biologically diverse, resilient, and self-sustaining ecosystems.

Priorities

The JITW restoration projects on non-Federal lands will be given priority consideration for funding where:

- (1) the project costs include employment opportunities for workers from timber-dependent communities.
- (2) a watershed analysis is underway or has been completed and meets the current Northwest Forest Plan Watershed Analysis Guidelines, or the intent of these guidelines (such as a watershed-scale planning document that identifies limiting factors and impaired ecosystem integrity, processes, and functions, then prioritizes activities that address identified problems). The watershed analysis or similar document must consider non-Federal lands in sufficient detail to provide direction for watershed restoration projects that will address causal problems in the watershed;
- (3) there are voluntary non-Federal landowner cooperators willing to provide sites for restoration projects, co-sign wildlife extension agreements lasting at least 10 years or longer to secure the Federal investment, and pursue the habitat objectives agreed to during project design; and
- (4) there are other cooperators committing cost-share assurances to assist project completion.

JITW funds will be used to hire, to the greatest extent feasible, workers from timber dependent communities that have been dislocated by a down turn in the timber industry to perform watershed restoration activities. This priority is cited in the statement from the House of Representatives Report on the FY 1996 Interior Appropriations Bill:

"The Committee urges FWS to take appropriate actions to use project dollars to hire dislocated timber and forest workers from forest dependent communities and to provide job training in support of those workers."

Coordination with other entities (e.g., State employment agencies) to establish long-term rather than short-term employment opportunities is also a priority consideration. This priority attempts to secure long term employment, "family wages," and benefits for workers.

The JITW projects will target protection and restoration objectives developed through watershed-scale analysis (e.g., as identified in watershed analysis plans promulgated under the Northwest Forest Plan). A watershed perspective is needed to ensure restoration projects treat the causes of problems rather than their symptoms. Key habitat restoration components of this watershed-based program are the control and prevention of road-related runoff and sediment production, restoration of riparian vegetation, and wetland restoration including restoration of instream habitat complexity and function. Since the goal of watershed restoration under the JITW program is self-sustaining, functional ecosystems, it is important to make decisions to implement projects involving instream structural measures in the context of the necessary complimentary riparian and up-slope restoration.

Funding priority will also be given to projects on non-Federal land that are complimentary to related watershed protection and restoration activities on Federal lands, lands within an Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and other lands in or adjacent to the affected watershed.

Funding for JITW watershed restoration projects not directly involving construction activities will also be considered for JITW funding if these projects contribute significantly to preventing watershed degradation (e.g., stream typing or forest resources inventory that will result in adequate data vital for watershed restoration or needed to classify or reclassify one or more streams affected by governmental regulations for forest practices) and meet timber-dependent community employment and other program objectives. Programmatically, most JITW funds will be used for construction-type watershed restoration projects.

Administration

Funding is intended to support administration and development of projects involving non-Federal lands. Service overhead costs (administration) will not exceed 15 percent of the overall JITW program costs. The overhead funds should be used to cover the costs of administering JITW projects, and so should be allocated such that the dollar amount received by the implementing offices (FWS State and Field offices) is commensurate with the percentage of the total JITW project funding that the office administers. The allocation of administrative funds should also consider the need to maintain some base funding for each administrative unit to ensure each program continues to be viable. The remaining funds in a fiscal year will be used to employ and train workers, and design and implement restoration projects through cooperative agreements and other funding arrangements in association with cooperators.

Mitigation

JITW program funds will not be used to fund projects required as compensatory mitigation for any Federal or State regulatory program. Projects receiving JITW funds will also not be eligible as compensatory mitigation for Federal or State regulatory programs during the agreement period. For example, funds allocated through the JITW program will not be used as cost share for watershed restoration or improvement measures required as mitigation or as part of the obligation of the permittee in the issuance of a Endangered Species Act Section 10 permit associated with the Habitat Conservation Plan as defined in Section 10 (2)(A)(ii) of the ESA. Program funds can be used for restoration actions that are above and beyond the required compensatory mitigation.

Jobs-in-the-Wood funds may be used to compliment projects that are funded through administrative penalty payments or other environmental damage settlements funds (e.g., National Restoration Damage Assessment projects) not directly associated with a compensatory mitigation requirement. This use of JITW funding is appropriate as long as the project contributes substantially to the JITW goals and meets JITW priorities.

Responsibilities

Service administered offices within the Pacific Northwest and northern California will coordinate funding and implementation of projects under the JITW program as part of an overall interagency, province level effort to ensure that:

- (1) interagency involvement in watershed analysis, project planning, and project implementation will result in technically sound projects that lead to ecosystem integrity; and
- (2) projects are linked to current watershed analysis findings, non-point watershed action plans, or other watershed ecosystem-based evaluations within the proposed project area. While many watershed analyses conducted under the Northwest Forest Plan will focus on Federal land, the overall restoration goals for watersheds, should include opportunities for watershed restoration on non-Federal lands. Watershed analysis information and other information that can be used to determine sources of fish and wildlife habitat concerns that are provided by project sponsors or cooperators will be given priority by Service offices implementing this program.

The Service will coordinate JITW project compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulations and policies (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act (CWA), Endangered Species Act (ESA)). Current regional policy should be consulted to address Cultural Resources, ESA, NEPA, Contaminant Surveys and CWA, (e.g., Nationwide 27 Permits).

Project Proposals

Projects identified by Service employees or others for funding consideration will be coordinated with entities such as Provincial Interagency Executive Committees (PIECs), Provincial Advisory Committees (PAC), Community Economic Revitalization Teams (CERTs), cooperating Federal and State agencies (e.g., Washington Employment Security Department), tribes, and interested publics.

To the extent possible, project proposals should include the data that will be used on an annual basis for accomplishment reporting (e.g., the Regional Ecosystem Office's restoration database system and the Reporting Accomplishments, below) and should be tracked by State and Field Offices each fiscal year. See the "Reporting Accomplishments" section in this Policy for a detailed description of these data requirements.

Cooperative Agreements

Cooperative agreements (either umbrella-type agreements or documents for site-specific projects, i.e., Wildlife Extension Agreements) are key legal instruments for implementing JITW projects. Site-specific agreements should include site plan maps and details, such as: the estimated acres and the watershed function to be restored, and methods and techniques proposed for accomplishing the restoration

actions. The agreement also should include a budget that specifies dollars to be used for training and employment, overhead, supplies, etc.

Umbrella-type cooperative agreements (e.g., with State Agencies or Conservation Districts) intended to provide funding to another agency, group, or entity to assist the Service in locating, planning, funding, implementing, monitoring, and/or reporting site specific JITW projects should incorporate compliance measures to ensure Service funds are properly used. Specific procedures, check points, and protocols that have been agreed to will ensure quality control of project planning and implementation with oversight by the appropriate Service office. Such cooperative agreements are especially useful to obligate current fiscal year funding when proposed projects are expected to be completed in the subsequent fiscal year.

Quality controls within umbrella-type cooperative agreements are recommended to ensure that each project is reviewed and approved by the appropriate Service office on a case-by-case basis. This will generally require a field visit to ensure that a project meets the Service's project design specifications and other criteria of the JITW program. Any changes that need to be made because of unanticipated problems or circumstances can be negotiated, but must be documented in authorized amendments to contracts, cooperative agreements, or wildlife extension agreements. Project inspections should be documented and entered into the project records. Before work begins, an agreement, (e.g., wildlife extension agreement) with a landowner(s), or a contract with a contractor (person or company supplying equipment, supplies or labor) will be needed as per normal Contracting and General Services procedures. Grant agreements are not to be used for JITW projects because they lack sufficient controls inherent to this type of funding instrument.

Monitoring

Generally, project proposals and plans will include an implementation monitoring component (i.e., to track whether projects are implemented as planned) and an effectiveness monitoring component (i.e., to track whether the project met its objectives). Cooperative Agreements should explicitly identify the party responsible for implementing monitoring actions.

Project implementation and effectiveness monitoring is important to ensure that Service funds are appropriately used (i.e., meet Congressional mandates and Budget Justification language), and to ensure that projects meet watersheds objectives, as well as the objectives of the JITW program). Monitoring occurs at both the project level and program level. Post-completion site visits are required. Monitoring should be designed to show that improvements over baseline conditions were achieved through implementation of the project. Photographic records can be used to document project results. Advanced planning and the use of aids such as permanent photographic stakes or other devices enhance a photograph's ability to capture the results of the project.

Reporting Accomplishments

State and Field Offices are responsible for annual reporting JITW accomplishments as part of the Service's Annual Work Plan requirements. Program results are public information and are to be made available to all interested parties. Annual accomplishment tracking on JITW will be collated by the Office of Technical Support through appropriate databases and reports. These data also will be used for budget related activities. Field Offices will maintain a database appropriate for these purposes for all projects funded through the JITW program.

In addition, reporting offices will annually provide a two-paragraph description of JITW projects completed during the fiscal year. Paragraphs should provide examples of project successes and lessons learned. Photographic slides depicting "before and after" restoration settings and slides of restoration techniques are needed and recommended for all projects to the extent possible.

Program Evaluation

Each year, as part of an evaluation of the JITW Program, an effort will be made to schedule an informal field tour for the Office of Technical Support and field staff to one or more JITW projects being implemented or completed by operations offices. This work supports team building and allows technical feedback opportunities for staff and supervisors. Program and operations issues and questions can be addressed informally during such trips. Informational memoranda to Program managers and the Regional Directorate would be developed by Office of Technical Support staff with field offices guiding such tours as a means of informing the directorate of status and progress in program implementation.